Some Early Church History; Birth and Growth of St. Stephe

By A. R. Markle.

The Rt. Rev. Jackson Kemper, bishop of Missouri, was also missionary bishop of Indiana and in the fall of 1835, soon after his consecration as such, he made a visit to Terre Haute. Probably his stay was short, only incidental to the stop over for the night after a hard day on the stage.

Later, in January and July, 1838, he was again in the town, but on Friday night, July 16, 1839, he notes that he officiated here and this service is said to have been held in the home of Dr. Richard Blake, who was occupying the old Linton house, now on Ohio street west of Sixth, but at the time located in the middle of the block opposite St. Joseph's church.

At another time the bishop states that he officiated twice at Terre Haute on the 29th of April, 1839, and there is some doubt as to which date saw the service in the home of Dr. Blake. His House on Butternut hill was built about this time and it may be that it was not finished, or that the family came to town during the winter of 1838 and 1839 for a more comfortable residence and occupied the Linton house during the absence of the owners.

Hold First Service.

However, it is told that, learning of the stay of the bishop at the Prairie House, Mrs. Blake, Mrs. Donaldson and Mrs. Krumbhaar, called on him and induced him to hold a service for the few families of Episcopalian faith.

At his suggestion they undertook to form a Sunday school among the families interested and he promised to send them a missionary to carry on services here.

In accordance with his promise the Rev. Charles Prindle came to Terre Haute and as he stated at the annual conference at Lafayette the following year, "until within the past three weeks, I have performed Divine services on every Lord's day since the 10th day of November last at the courthouse in Terre Haute." The results of his work he summarized as: "Average Sunday school scholars 65, number of communicants 8, baptized infants 5, married 1, buried 1."

The first steps to organize a church were taken by making a list of those who signified their intention by their names written on an agreement. These were William F. Krumbhaar and wife, Thomas H. Blake, Jacob Bourne, H. D. Williams and wife; Richard Blake and wife; D. S. Donaldson and wife; A. B. Fontaine and wife; John Routledge and wife; Mrs. Agnes and Mrs. Eunice Saltenbury, L. O. Schultz, E. Daniels, Levi Warren, W. L. Stone and wife; James Warren, G. W. Langworthy, Mrs. Lucia M. Johnston, Mrs. Elizabeth Delland, Mrs. Catherine Mann, Susan Merry and Mrs. Mary [illegible]. (Beach

[illegible] this extent had grown the congregation from the three communicants of Mr. Prindle's report.

Meet at Warren Home.

In consequence of the desire of the above named, there met in the home of Levi Warren at the southwest corner of Eighth and Ohio, on the evening of April 15, 1840, Messrs. Thomas H. Blake, Richard Blake, Levi Warren, Jacob Bourne, Wm. F. Krumbhaar, W. L. Stone, John Routledge, L. O. Schultz, James Warren and G. W. Langworthy, who with Rev. Charles Prindle adopted the constitution of the diocese and pledged the meeting to be governed by the constitution and canons of the Protestant Episcopal church in the United States of America.

They adopted resolutions giving the name of St. Stephen's church to the organization and providing for its government by two church wardens and four vestrymen. To these offices they elected Thomas H. Blake, senior warden; Wm. F. Krumbhaar, junior warden; Dr. E. Daniels, Levi Warren, Jacob Bourne and John Routledge, vestrymen. Two months later they chose Rev. Prindle as rector of their church, and elected Mr. Krumbhaar to represent them at the diocesan convention to be held at Lafayette, July 10, 1840.

Mr. Prindle left Terre Haute in March, 1841 to become the rector of the congregation at Lawrenceburg, Ind., and died a few years later in the east. He was succeeded here for a time by the Rev. M. Killikelly, missionary at Vincennes.

After him came the Rev. Robert D. Croes, prounced and in one record spelled Cruise, who took his duties very seriously. Opposite the name of one of his communicants in the old parish registers is the note "Baptised in Indianapolis" and later "Confirmed in Christ church, Indianapolis." Later Mr. Croes notes, "This is irregular and I have filed three charges against him with the bishop."

Among The Pioneers.

Ie was, however, a hard and conscientious worker and under his direction a lot was leased and a church erected on the west side of Fifth street, north of the alley between Wabash and Cherry. The corner stone was laid after a service Sunday evening, June 1, 1845, at the usual place of worship in the Johnston building at the southeast corner of Third and Ohio, conducted by the Rev. Andrew Wylie, D. D. The congregation then marched to the site of the new church and after an appropriate service by Mr. Croes, Mr. Wylie again preached.

Bishop Kemper consecrated the building October 2, 1845, and services probably had been held there shortly before.

The lot was enclosed by a fence paid for by the sewing society, who also furnished the lamps and carpet for the chancel. The Sunday school at St. Luke's church, Philadelphia, gave the damask covering for the lecterns. The money for the construction was secured through the efforts of Mr. Croes, who travelled extensively through the western states and as far south as New Orleans. The masonry was by Zenas Smith, and the architect and builder was Jindal A. Madison.

The lease on the lot expired in 1849 and on October 8, 1849, it was purchased from Thomas H. Pope of Louisville, for $900, the vestry giving five notes for $180 each payable [illegible] each year and secured by a mortgage.

November 22, 1844, the Rev. Samuel Roosevelt Johnson, of Lafayette, deeded to St. Stephen's church through Rev. Robert B. Croes, Luke Drury, Payton Topping, William K. Krumbhaar and John Routledge, vestrymen and wardens and their successors in office, one-third of a lot lying between the present Crawford and Deming streets from Seventh almost to Ninth, for one dollar.

The vestry platted this into lots and sold lot one to David West in 1862; lot two to Louis Cliver in 1860, and lot three to Lyman P. Felver in 1863. These three lots lie on Seventh street and the balance of the plat was sold as lot four, to Levi Warren in 1861. Altogether they received for the tract of land $2,240. Today it is appraised for $9,560, not including the improvements. Not a great increase in value over more than seventy years.

In 1847 Rev. Philip E. Milledoler gave St. Stephen's 20 acres south of Seeleyville which they later sold for $150. Inadvertently they sold what they did not own for the deed described the land as the west half of a certain tract when they owned the east half and it was necessary in 1905 for the church to make a new deed for land sold by them in 1857, nearly 50 years before.

Early Struggles.

Mr. Croes seems to have been away for nearly two years in his endeavors to raise money for his parish for there are no entries from December, 1842, to August, 1844, when he resumed his labors here. He served until March 4, 1850, when he resigned, but he continued to live here for some time after, for he records his objection to one of the parishioners who went to Indianapolis for a service, much to his concern.

He was followed by Rev. Charles P. Clark, who came Jan. 15, 1850, and resigned March 6, 1852. After a long interval, a service was held here by Rev. D. D. Antwerp, Dec. 12, 1852, who so pleased his audience that a call was made by the vestry the same day and he became the rector of the church, serving for nearly three years.

Under his care the vestry resolved Oct. 1, 1854, "to no longer ask aid for the parish from the board of missions, effective at once." They then resolved to rent the pews in the church and were so successful in their efforts that they were able to pay their entire expenses the following year.

In January of that year the ladies of the Church Aid society paid for the painting of the exterior of the church and they also paid for an altar cloth.

Dr. Van Antwerp resigned April 9, 1855, effective June 12, and was followed by Rev. Wm. G. Spencer, August, 1855, who had been assistant minister of St. Paul's church at Troy, N. Y. He arrived here October 17, 1855, and held a full service the following Sunday. As he was not yet ordained as a priest and was but a deacon, he was ordained at St. Paul's church, Jeffersonville, Nov. 14, and formally instituted here as rector by Bishop Upfold Jan. 6, the following year.

Birth Of St. Stephen's.

During his term the church purchased "an instrument for church music" a melodeon, for $400, cleared off the debt of the church and bought two lots at Seventh and Eagle on which to build a new church to accomodate the growing congregation. Th[illegible] $1,500 proceeds [illegible] July 1 [illegible], under his [illegible] helped pay for the new building.

Mr. Spencer served through the trying days preceding the Civil War and as a southerner by birth and family, he must have suffered great distress. He resigned April 1861, but held on until June 8.

By A. R. Markle.

CHAPTER II.

During the service of Rev. William G. Spencer, the vestry bought two lots at the southeast corner of Seventh and Eagle streets on which to build a new structure to accommodate the larger congregation. They paid Chauncey Rose $1,115 for the corner and Charles Wood $900 for the other on which later the rectory was built. The deeds to these lots were dated June 29, 1859, but no steps toward the building were taken until after the coming of Rev. Chauncey W. Fitch, who came Oct. 1, 1861.

An architect of whom we know no more than his name, W. R. Parsons, drew the plans, but the estimates were above the figure the church was ready to meet and the tower and bell were omitted from the contract and the work started the cornerstone being laid with appropriate services by Rt. Rev. George Upfold, bishop of the diocese, on May 4, 1858.

It was nearly a year later, March 5, 1863, before the first service was held in the new building; the last service in the old building in Fifth street, February 22. The old building had been sold to Thomas B. Johns for $1,500 on July 20, 1861 and they had occupied it for nearly two years after the sale.

The Rev. Fitch resigned Sept. 1, 1863, to accept a chaplaincy in the U. S. army and left for his station October 31. He was followed by the Rev. Thomas Mills Martin of Newcastle, Delaware, who arrived April 24, 1864. A hard worker, he was compelled to relinquish his work here by a nervous breakdown and tendered his resignation March 10, 1869. A special meeting of the vestry was held the next day and his resignation accepted, a leave of absence with pay for one year from July being granted. He died, however, at Nyack, N. Y., on January 15, 1870. A marble tablet in the church is in his memory.

Rev. Austin Called.

During his time of illness, his failing health, Rev. DeEstaing had charge of the church for a time and Rev. Albert E. Wells of Chicago was called by the vestry as an assistant to Mr. Martin, for one year from December 1, 1869.

The rector, following the death of Mr. Martin, was Thomas R. Austin, who served from August 16, 1870, to November 20, 1871, when he resigned, effective Dec. 1. Following him came several ministers who were offered the rectorship, but who declined for various reasons and finally Rev. Spruille Burford of Alexandria, La. came and preached his first service here May 30, 1872. His former parish and diocese were so insistent on his return that he resigned and preached his farewell sermon on September 22, less than four months later.

On the recommendation of Bishop Talbott, the vestry called Rev. S. Francis Dunham, who came from Christ church, New York City, Dec. 8. The week before his arrival, the music committee was authorized to trade in the old melodeon which had so long served the church and was still in use for the Sunday school. However, it was not until following March that the com-

mittee reported the purchase of an organ for $200 with an allowance of $75 for the old one.

With the coming of Mr. Dunham, the church seemed to take on a new life, the pews had been made free the previous year and the "free church" system had been so successful that the finance committee reported April 7, 1893, the church was free from debt and that the receipts for the past year had exceeded the expenses. Incidentally, it might be noted that the Ladies' Aid had contributed $1,200 during the year.

Plans for the tower cost $75.00 and the entire construction, which was begun and finished that year, cost $2,000.00. In appreciation of his services, the rector's salary which had been set at $1,200.00 when he was called, was increased to $1,500.00.

The organist had been paid various sums for the service and under Mr. Dunham, the salary for Professor Zobel, an outstanding musician of the time, was set at $300.00 a year.

Generous Organist.

Following him came Miss Mary M. Jewett, who after some time as organist was surprised to receive a check from the vestry for $50.00. Her surprise, however was unequal to that of the vestry when they received from her a note to the effect that she wished her services to be gratuitous and enclosed the check. Her attitude was at variance with a later choir leader, who shall be nameless here, but was a well known soprano of the times, who demanded $5.00 a day for her singing and when the vestry refused to pay it, offered to sing until Easter at the old rate of $3.00, but insisted she must have $5.00 thereafter. It is recorded however, that she sang another year for $5.00 per.

The free church system seemed to fail for the vestry in the spring of 1879 was obliged to again return to paying the rector at the original rate of $1,200 a year and in the fall of 1881 returned to renting the pews.

Apparently this was successful for the finance committee reported four months later that the pews had brought in $2,344 and that more pews were needed. By removing the baptismal font to the north transept room was made for four more and they too were soon rented. In April the treasurer was instructed to present Prof. Zobel with $100 at Easter. Possibly he, too, was serving without pay this time. In the same month the salary of the rector was increased to $1,500.

The Easter offering amounted to $979.03, including $105.06 from the Ladies' Aid and $214.35 from St. Hilda's Sisterhood. Prosperity seemed to have returned and in September a committee was instructed to find a suitable place for a mission in the southern part of the city.

December 4, 1882, the senior warden, George C. Duy, resigned as he was leaving Terre Haute permanently. Not only had he served in such capacity for many years but he was also chancellor of the diocese and it is more than a coincidence that his son, Albert W. Duy is today, not only senior warden of St. Paul's church at Bloomsburg, Pa., but is also chancellor of the diocese of Harrisburg.

With the increase in salary, the rector was also voted a vacation to be taken at his convenience and in his absence the Rev. A. Reeves of St. Matthew's church at Worthington was asked to serve two Sundays and was paid $10 for each.

Mr. Dunham resigned on his return from his vacation, effective Nov. 1, and in November the vestry called the Rev. Dr. Stevens Parker, a former warden of Racine College, but the call reached him too late as he had already accepted a call to Calvary church, Stonington, Conn. Some correspondence with Dr. Walter Delafield resulted in his meeting with the vestry to get an idea of the parish and the work to be done here and he and his wife being pleased with the prospect here, he accepted the call and entered upon his work Feb. 10, 1884. His salary was set at $1,500 with the assurance that when the pew rents increased sufficiently it would be made $2,000. A house was secured for him on Ohio street and in May a contract for the erection of the rectory on the adjoining lot was let to A. Cortner & Son for $6,434 with J. A. Vrydagh as architect at a fee of $162.50.

The house was completed the following summer and Dr. Delafield occupied it as the first rector to live near the church.

Missions Started.

In the spring of 1884 a bell, which had been purchased by contributions, some as small as 1 cent, was hung in the tower, but the financial condition failed to improve and Dr. Delafield resigned May 15, 1886, effective June 1, to take up mission and social work in South Chicago. During, and as a part of, his work here missions were established in remote parts of the city. St. Luke's was built at Gilbert avenue and College and became self-supporting. St. John's, on Sycamore, east of Fourteenth, flourished for a time, but St. Mark's and St. Matthew's have left no trace of their activities.

Rev. James D. Stanley was called Sept. 1 and came from the Church of the Epiphany at Cincinnati, Oct. 9, 1888, to meet the vestry. His service began Oct. 17.

Mr. Stanley was an energetic worker and soon secured pledges for the erection of a parish house. The corner stone was laid Sept. 16, 1891.

Mr. Stanley resigned April 8, 1896, effective May 26, to return to Cincinnati, this time to the Church of the Savior.

Aug. 5, 1896, the vestry called Rev. John E. Sulger of the Trinity parish, Atchison, Kansas, who came in October. The salary was set at $1,800 a year and the church returned to the "free church" system.

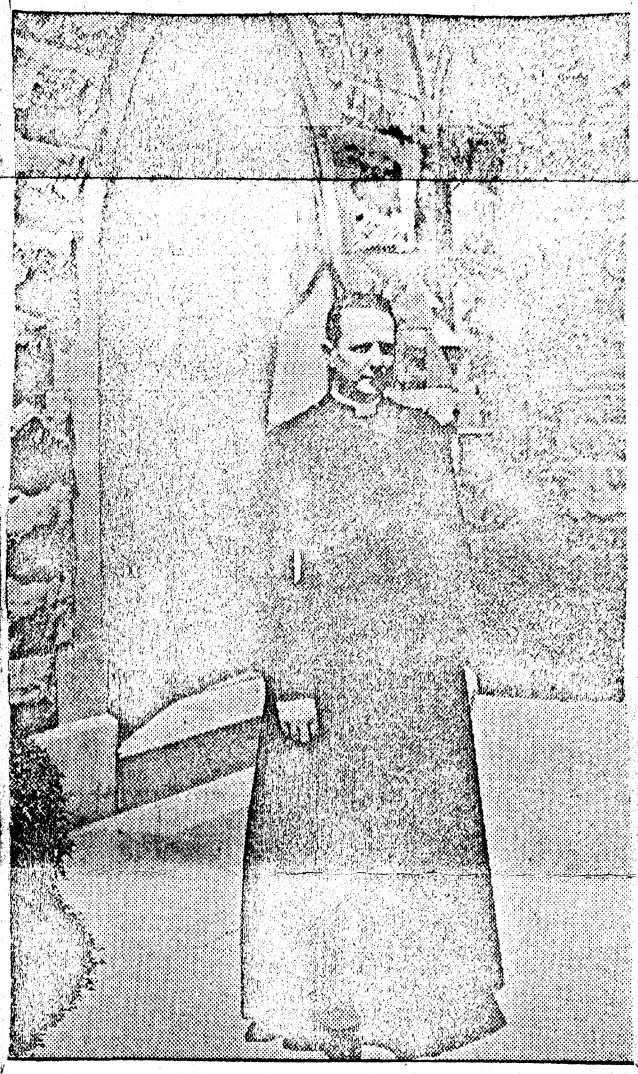
Ten years later his salary was made $2,000 and, in 1923, it was raised to $3,600 a year. Through his efforts the church was rebuilt by a Bedford stone veneer, a new organ installed, the walls and ceiling frescoed, a new heating system installed and two missions established, one at the northwest corner of Thirteenth and Linden streets, which has not survived him, and the other—St. George's—on Ferguson hill, which after the destruction of its building by fire has been rebuilt and is still in service. Mr. Sulger died in 1929, rich in the esteem of Terre Haute citizens.

Before a successor could be found, services were conducted by Rev. Charles S. Heckingbottam and by Robert C. Alexander, deacon at the time, but who returned here after his ordination to serve as locum tenens. Rev. Charles Noyes Tyndall served for a little over a year, but failing to be elected to attend the triennium at Denver, resigned and was called by a Fort Wayne church who sent him there at their expense.

Mr. Alexander then served until Rev. William T. Capers, the present rector, was called and arrived.

St. Stephen's has prospered and grown under his direction. It is recognized as one of the outstanding churches of the Episcopal faith in this section of the country.

Present Pastor Of St. Stephen's



REV. WILLIAM T. CAPERS.

Dr. Capers has been in charge of St. Stephen's Episcopal church here for the past four years.

DEDICATE PLAQUE AT ST. STEPHEN'S

Bronze Tablet Honors Members of Parish Who Served In Armed Forces During War.

J3/3/47 Tr. Tribune

An impressive bronze plaque, honoring all the youth of the parish who served in World War II and particularly in memory of two young men who lost their lives overseas, was dedicated at St. Stephen's church Sunday during the mid-morning service.

The memorial was dedicated by the St. Stephen's rector, Rev. Thomas Mabley, after being installed on the west wall of the church a week ago. Inscribed on the surface of the plaque are the words: "In honor of all the youth of this parish who served in World War II in the armed forces of their country to preserve the freedoms of her people, and particularly in loving memory of Lieutenant Alfred H. Conrad, U.S.A., 1921-1944, and Lieutenant Stanley Warren Sayre, U.S.N., 1918-1945, who died under alien skies in that Holy Cause."

At the bottom of the plaque is the passage: "They will go from strength to strength and Unto the God of Gods appeareth every one of them in Zion."

During the service Rev. Mabley thanked members of the congregation for having given offerings for placement in the church of the memorial.

"This tablet will long recount the part our young church men played when called upon by their country, and will be a silent teacher to our children," he said. "It is here to teach us and those to come that there are principles of life that are worth sacrificing and even dying for, and therefore worth living and building for. This tablet must never let us forget how costly is our heritage, and therefore how very precious and dear it must ever be."

Lieutenant Conrad was killed in Holland, and Lieutenant Sayre lost his life while on duty in the Pacific. Both young men also were members of the St. Stephen's church choir.